

The University of Maine DigitalCommons@UMaine

Cultural Affairs Distinguished Lecture Series

Cultural Affairs Committee

3-29-2006

Kenro Izu: Sacred Places

Museum of Art

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/ca-lectureseries>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

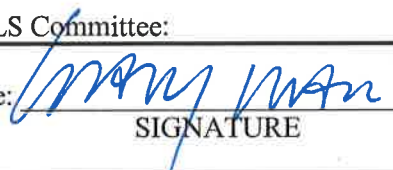
Repository Citation

Museum of Art, "Kenro Izu: Sacred Places" (2006). *Cultural Affairs Distinguished Lecture Series*. 2.
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/ca-lectureseries/2>

This Grant Application is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Cultural Affairs Distinguished Lecture Series by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

**THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS/DISTINGUISHED
LECTURE SERIES COMMITTEE
GRANT APPLICATION**

PROVIDE 10 (TEN) COPIES, INCLUDING THE ORIGINAL.
PLEASE PLACE A COPY OF THIS COVER SHEET ON TOP OF EACH COPY

I. Applicant/Organization:	Museum of Art
II. a. Responsible Organization Officer:	Wally Mason
b. Title:	Director
c. Campus Address (include EMail and Telephone):	Norumbega Hall, 561.3350, w@umit.maine.edu
III. Summary of program requiring funding (title; featured artist(s); speaker(s); scheduled date (s): Art Exhibition: <i>Kenro Izu: Sacred Places</i> Presented at the Museum of Art, Norumbega Hall, April 14 – July 1, 2006 Expand in fuller detail, a supporting statement with <u>detailed, itemized budget</u>. Funding for current application is contingent upon submission of detailed budget and attendance report for any previous years' grants.	
IV. a. Total funding required for program:	\$15,483
b. Amount committed by applicant organization:	\$4,635
c. Amount committed by	\$
d. Amount requested from other funding sources	\$6,048*
e. Amount requested of Cultural Affairs/DLS Committee:	\$4,800
Signature of responsible organization officer/date: <u></u> <u>03/29/06</u> DATE SIGNATURE	

***MEMBERS OF THE MUSEUM OF ART**

\$ 3000

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATION TO:

**CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
C/O PRESIDENT'S OFFICE
200 ALUMNI HALL, CAMPUS**

5/04

Original

Norumbega Hall
40 Harlow Street
Bangor, Maine 04401
207.561.3350
Fax 207.561.3351

March 27, 2006

Cultural Affairs Committee
c/o The President's Office
200 Alumni Hall

Dear Cultural Affairs Committee:

The Museum of Art respectfully requests funding for the presentation of the art exhibition *Kenro Izu: Sacred Places* during the spring semester of the 2005/2006 academic year. The exhibition has been organized by the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts and consists of more than 50 photographs. The exhibition, which will be of significant cultural and educational advantage to the entire university community, will be presented from April 14 through July 1, 2006.

The primary role of the Museum of Art is to bring to the University and the external community, vital, investigative, and scholarly exhibitions; while simultaneously contributing to the dialog within the international arts community by organizing exhibitions, producing relevant collateral materials, and scheduling critically significant traveling exhibitions. However, the exhibitions and outreach programs, while imperative to the mission of the Museum of Art, are not self-sustaining. It is in support of these activities that the Museum seeks support from the Cultural Affairs Committee for 31% of the project's expenses.

Implementation: Admission, tours, and related programs are free for UM students. The exhibition will include: extensive didactic labeling, catalogs, gallery guides, and explanatory wall panels when relevant. Press releases are sent to local, state and regional media, local schools, as well as arts related and art specific publications. Exhibition announcements reach a current mailing of over 8000, including 2700 sent on campus to faculty, professional and classified employees. Educational outreach will consist of directed tours for university courses, K-12 students, civic and senior citizen groups. Public presentations and lectures will further enhance the educational mission of the Museum during this project. A half-page advertisement will be placed in the Bangor Metro magazine.

Evaluation: The Museum of Art has implemented specific evaluation tools to assist in future programming and enhanced professional presentation. The staff meets at the end of an exhibition/program to determine the relative success or failure of a project. Criteria include: attendance, scholarly content of the exhibition, visual appeal of the works of art, the installation, impact of schedule on staff, educational value, quality of publications, marketing results, community interest, and staff observations. The value of implementing this evaluation strategy will lead to improved wall text, more professional labels and gallery guides, as well as increasingly effective directed tours.

Please see the attached budget, visual and narrative support documents for the project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Wally Mason
Director

UMMA



Project: Art Exhibition, Museum of Art

Kenro Izu: Sacred Places

April 14 - July 1, 2006

BUDGET

Total Project Expenses:

Participation Fee	\$7,000
Website update/maintanance	750
Bulk Mailing	508
Wall Text	140
Printing	2,780
Photocopying/Duplication/Gallery Guides	35
Shipping/Handling	3,200
Advertising	1,070
Total Project Expenses	\$15,483

Total Project Revenue:

Museum of Art E&G (30%)	4,635
Members of the Museum of Art (39%)	6,048
TOTAL REQUEST TO CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (31%)	4,800*
Total Project Revenue	\$15,483

TOTAL REQUEST TO CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (31%) \$4,800*

*Item in the *expenses* category for which CULTURAL AFFAIRS funding is requested is in bold type.



FINAL REPORT

Budget:

Project: Art Exhibition, Museum of Art
Kenro Izu: Sacred Places
April 14 - July 1, 2006

CULTURAL AFFAIRS GRANT AMOUNT: **3,000.00**

Exhibition Fee 7,000.00

Transportation Fee 3,200.00

Total project expenses paid by Cultural Affairs Grant 3,000.00



Project: Art Exhibition, Museum of Art

Kenro Izu: Sacred Places

April 14 – July 1, 2006

Kenro Izu: Sacred Places is the first comprehensive museum exhibition devoted to the work of this renowned contemporary Japanese-born photographer. From Asia to the islands of the Pacific, from the Middle East to Europe, Kenro Izu's images, made over the course of the last 22 years, depict religious sites that have been in use for millennia.

For a viewer new to the photographs of Kenro Izu, the images may require an investment of time. Although these pictures appear simple in design, they are in fact quite complex in construction. Because of the bulk of his huge camera, Izu's photographs cannot be spontaneous creations. Rather they are the carefully thought-out compositions of a remorselessly reductive and subtractive eye. When asked what the photographs are about, Izu says they are about the "spirits" of these places. No human beings appear in his images. Rather, the elements of Izu's photographic constructions are earth, stone, sky, water, which together form the *spirit* of a place.

Technically, the work of Kenro Izu is unique and uncomfortably difficult to produce. Working with a custom-made, 300-pound camera, the photographer creates 14 x 20" negatives that are then printed on hand-coated papers using the platinum/palladium process. Each photograph takes three days to print. Izu's photographs exemplify a Japanese tradition of attention to artistic details, and his hand-coated prints are perhaps the most finely crafted photographs made in the world today. In his travels to places as remote as the Himalayan kingdom of Mustang, Izu typically produces only 20 to 35 negatives during a 3 week period. His entire body of work, representing more than 20 years of photography, barely exceeds 2,000 images, a testament to his exacting approach to the art.

At a time when many of the world's sacred sites are endangered - because of neglect, excessive tourism, and even deliberate destruction - Izu's photography attempts to document a worldwide archipelago of spiritual architecture. "The building has to be there to photograph... but the atmosphere is what I'm interested in. The important thing is the spirituality of these monuments," Izu told an interviewer. "It's not just a photograph of a building. The building is a representation of the spirit."

Kenro Izu was born in Osaka in 1949. He attended Nihon University College of Art before moving to New York City in the early 1970s. He has lived there ever since. After discovering the mammoth plate photographs of Egypt taken by the British Victorian photographer Francis Frith, Izu traveled to Egypt in 1979 and began to photograph the Pyramids and other sacred monuments. A practicing Buddhist, Izu has most recently focused his energies on spiritual sites in India, Cambodia, Burma, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and China.



FINAL REPORT: CULTURAL AFFAIRS GRANT

Kenro Izu: Sacred Places

April 14 - July 1, 2006

Kenro Izu: Sacred Places was presented as a featured exhibition of the Museum of Art's Spring 2006 schedule. The exhibition consisted of 36 often large-scale platinum-palladium photographs of various sacred sites throughout the world. *Sacred Places* was extremely well received by the public and the subject of tours from schools, senior groups and social agencies throughout the region. During the length of the exhibition over 2000 visitors attended the museum.

The exhibiton was covered by local media through various articles relating to its content and curators. Publicity included: 7000 color announcements distributed to K - 12 schools, colleges, museums and galleries throughout New England and surrounding communities as well as an additional 1600 which were distributed to the UM campus community.

Kenro Izu conducted a well attended gallery talk at the museum on June 1, 2006. With nearly 80 guests in attendance, Mr. Izu enlightened the audience outlining the arduous efforts made to photograph remote subjects and including an explanation of the platinum printing process.

Hours for the exhibition were Monday - Saturday, 9 - 5 pm.

Please find the following attachments:

Final budget for the project
Exhibition announcement
PEM publication
The Weekly article, June 8, 2006

www.umma.umaine.edu

PRST STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
PERMIT #98
BANGOR, ME

chools 3 Community News 8 Sports 4 Yesterday 5 Calendar 2 Seniors 10 Classifieds 13

THE WEEKLY

Greater Bangor's Weekly Community News Source

*****0011 BOO6
*****ECRWSS** BOO6
POSTAL CUSTOMER
PO BOX 331
EDDINGTON, ME 04428-0331

Volume 16 Issue 23

8, 2006

Photographs capture sacred places

BY ARDEANA HAMLIN
FOR THE WEEKLY

BANGOR — Stone in its many incarnations — mountain, man-made monument or ledge — is a powerful presence in photographer Kenro Izu's work.

"Stone is a symbol of eternity; it's always there through the rise and fall of civilizations. All things return to the earth," he told an audience of more than 50 at a recent lecture at the University of Maine Museum of Art. Attendees listened atten-

tively and appreciatively as the artist talked about his photographs comprising the exhibit "Sacred Places" on display at the museum.

Izu, 57, has spent 25 years photographing sites all over the world that human beings associate with religious belief. He has trundled his large-format, custom-made camera up the mountains of Nepal to remote monasteries. He has trained its lens on the carved stone heads of Easter Island. He has clicked its shutter on Stonehenge in England and Angkor Wat in Cambo-

dia. He recently returned from a trip to Bhutan.

In his introduction of Izu, museum director Wally Mason said, "The photographs and the person who made them are so wedded they can't be separated. Looking at these photos every day... they have a resonance that accrues."

Izu was born in Japan where Mount Fuji is sacred to religious belief. He studied photography in Japan before coming to the United States in 1970.

"Many places where people pray are not manmade," he

said, Mount Kailas in Tibet is one of those places and is believed to be the navel of the earth, the axis of the universe, a belief reflected in the composition of Izu's photograph "Mount Kailas at Dawn, 2000." In the image, the white tip of the mountain emerges between the heavy dark sides of two mountains flanking it.

Photographer Page Eastman of Bangor, who studied monasticism and religion at Bangor Theological Seminary, said the experience of viewing Izu's

See Izu, Page 12

Izu

Continued from Page 1

work encourages her to practice her theology.

"[The photos] capture the mystery of the spirit," she said. Some of the photographs are of doorways, passageways and entryways of temples, and "offer glimpses into the unknown. It's like an invitation to enter the realm of spirituality," she said. "What will happen if you enter? Will you encounter dark or light?"

In 1979 Izu went to Egypt where he visited the pyramids at Giza, a trip that was the pedestal for his life's work as an artist.

His growing interest in the sacred places of the world brought with it the realization that many of those ancient sites associated with religious belief were endangered — by the slow grind of time, the relentless pressures of tourism, sudden shifts in governmental policy and unpredictable changes in the environment.

Impermanence, he said, including that of stone, is the permanent condition of things. Through photography Izu finds a definition of life. "I try not to create," he said. "I try to receive and document what I receive." He relies on his sense of hearing, his sense of touch and his feelings — not just his sight — to guide him in selecting what he photographs and how he frames what he sees. "I must have freedom to see and freedom to feel," he said.

Izu's camera point of view is straight-on. He used a very simple tool to teach himself that technique — a level.

If the camera points up, he said, the view feels top heavy. If the camera is pointed down, the weight is with the photographer.

The neither-up-nor-down



Kenro Izu's "Maui at Rano Raraku, Easter Island, 1989," platinum palladium print on watercolor paper. (Image courtesy of Peabody Essex Museum)

view imbues his work with neutrality.

"At first, I had to force myself not to put emotion into [the photographs]," he said.

Izu's photographic heroes are the 19th century photographers, many of whom are anonymous.

"I'm trying to create those kinds of photos," he said. And like those photographers, Izu uses a large-format camera, which produces 14-inch by 20-inch negatives. The camera weighs 300 pounds. Why such a big camera?

"I have a large sense of existence," he quipped. "I need a big camera. But I am 5 feet, 7 inches tall, weigh 130 pounds. At age 57, I'm starting to feel the weight. The path to enlightenment is not easy, nor is the photography."

The technical complexities of Izu's art involve hefting the weight of the camera to remote corners of the earth where weather and light often

are not cooperative. It took three trips to Mount Kailas to get the photo he wanted.

Back in his studio in New York, craftsmanship is paramount as he makes direct contact prints on watercolor paper. He selects the paper, deacidifies it, hand paints it with platinum and palladium, dries it, exposes it, fixes it and dries the resulting print. The process takes three days.

Often, he said, he produces only one print of the quality he desires in 12 attempts. It may take him as long as a year of looking at negatives before he decides which ones to print.

"If my vision is artistic enough and someone likes my work, I am happy," Izu said.

Izu and his wife Yumiko, also a photographer, also conduct a commercial business as an adjunct to the fine arts aspect of Izu's work. They photograph jewels — another incarnation of stone — for high-end companies such as

Mikimoto, Harry Winston and Tiffany and Co. Visit www.kenroizu.com for more information about their work.

Izu is the founder of Friends Without a Border, a not-for-profit organization established in 1999 which supports Angkor Hospital for Children in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

"Sacred Places" is on exhibit at the University of Maine Museum of Art through July 1. Gallery hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Admission is \$3, free for museum members and UMaine students with a MaineCard. Izu's photographs are on loan from The Lane Collection, courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass., which organized the exhibit. For more information about the exhibit or upcoming exhibits at the University of Maine Museum of Art, call 561-3350, or visit www.umma.umaine.edu.